

## OVERVIEW

There is a continuum of legal permanency, with reunification being the most preferred permanency goal, followed by - in order of preference - adoption then guardianship. When legal permanency cannot be achieved Permanent Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative (PPFWR) and Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) are goals that can provide documented, long-term, achievable, permanent plans for youth in foster care.

Caseworkers must fully explore and document all reasonable efforts to finalize a permanency plan with the preferred goals of reunification, adoption, or guardianship. The caseworker may only consider PPFWR or APPLA as potential permanency goals, when there are documented compelling reasons, which support the decision that reunification, adoption, and guardianship are no longer viable options for the youth. The youth's permanency plan must be based on his/her own best interests and individual needs and must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Note:** A youth's age, placement, or disability alone should never be a disqualifier for a more preferred permanency goal, such as adoption or guardianship.

For youth who cannot be reunified, adopted or placed with a guardian, the permanency goal must reflect a permanent placement with a nurturing adult with whom there is a strong attachment and sense of belonging. In cases where the youth is not placed with an adult who is committed to his/her long-term care and welfare, every effort must be made to secure a network of supportive people who will assist and be responsive to the youth's needs while in foster care and after the foster care case closes.

### Permanent Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative

The goal of Permanent Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative (PPFWR) was established to provide youth a permanent home with a relative, who may be unable or unwilling to pursue adoption or guardianship.

**Note:** The relative's reasons for not pursuing adoption or guardianship must be documented in the case service plan.

PPFWR does not provide youth with a permanent legal parent or guardian; however when reunification, adoption, and guardianship have been ruled out, PPFWR is the preferred goal. When PPFWR is a youth's permanency goal, the goal **must** be reviewed annually to ensure that another goal is not more appropriate for the youth.

**Note:** The annual permanency goal review of PPFWR is required whether the relative becomes licensed.

### Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)

Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement was established as a permanency option to be used when all of the other goals have been ruled out. *Planned* means the arrangement is intended and deliberate; *Permanent* means it will be enduring and stable; and *Living Arrangement* includes the physical placement of the youth **and** the quality of care, supervision, and nurturing that the youth will be provided by a significant adult(s).

APPLA is the least preferred permanency goal as it does not provide youth with a permanent legal parent/guardian. When APPLA is a youth's permanency goal, it must be reviewed annually to ensure that another goal is not more appropriate for the youth.

A permanency goal of APPLA must include a stable, secure living arrangement that includes relationships with significant adults in the youth's life that will continue beyond foster care. **A youth with the goal of APPLA may continue to reside in his/her placement with a foster family, in a long/short term facility, or may choose to live independently.**

### GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

PPFWR and APPLA require documentation of the stability of the placement and the supportive relationships in the youth's life. The caregiver, youth, and supervising agency must acknowledge and agree to the conditions by which the youth will be provided a safe, secure and caring relationship that is the key to healthy development and a sense of identity for the foster child.

PPFWR and APPLA require an open foster care case with continued case management services and the court must continue to hold permanency hearings. Progress towards a youth's

permanency goal must be reviewed during a family team meeting (FTM) quarterly and 30 calendar days prior to a goal change; see FOM 722-06B, Family Team Meeting Types and Timeframes.

For PPFWR or youth seeking APPLA approval but intend to remain in a foster home, the caseworker must discuss the expected role and responsibilities of the relative or foster parent and document all of the following within the case service plan:

- The relative or foster parent has a strong commitment to caring permanently for the youth.
- The relative or foster parent is able to meet the youth's physical, emotional, and developmental needs.
- The youth demonstrates a strong attachment to the relative or foster parent.
- The relative or foster parent has been fully informed of the all other permanency options.
- For temporary wards, indicate whether the parent(s) has been informed of the decision to change the permanency goal.
- The relative or foster parent has been informed that he/she must adhere to the *Prudent Parent Standard* guidelines; see FOM 722-11, Delegation of Parental Consent.
- Indicate whether the relative or foster parent is aware that the plan must be reviewed quarterly to determine whether a more permanent plan is possible for the youth. Also indicate whether he/she understands that he/she may choose to adopt or move to guardianship at any time.

### Living Arrangement (APPLA)

A youth may continue to reside in his/her placement with a foster family, in a long/short term facility, or may choose to live independently.

### Age

Youth must be at least 16 years old for APPLA.

There is no minimum age requirement for PPFWR.

## CHANGING THE PERMANENCY GOAL

The youth's permanency goal cannot be changed to PPFWR or APPLA in MiSACWIS, until the permanency goal has been submitted to and accepted by the court.

**Note:** The permanency *goal established date* is the date the order approving the goal change is signed.

### Prior to Requesting a Goal Change

In order to determine that PPFWR or APPLA is the best permanency goal for the youth and that reasonable efforts have been made to ensure that alternate, more permanent options, are no longer in the youth's best interest all of the following must occur:

- The caseworker must meet separately with the youth and his/her caregiver(s) to discuss the benefits of adoption and guardianship, including the legal and possible financial benefits.
- Compelling reasons must be documented; see Compelling Reasons in this item.
- A supportive adult should be identified; see Supportive Adult in this item.
- Each case service plan must include the specific efforts to complete a full and ongoing relative search for both maternal and paternal relatives for placement and permanent supportive connections. All relatives who the youth maintains contact with must be documented; see FOM 722-3, Relative Engagement and Placement.
- Schedule a Family Team Meeting (FTM) with all significant persons in the youth's life and discuss the plan during the meeting or within seven days of the meeting with persons who cannot attend; see FOM 722-6B, Family Team Meeting.

FTM participants must include:

- Youth.
- Foster parent(s).

- The identified supportive adult.
- Permanency Resource Monitor.
- CASA, if applicable.
- Lawyer-Guardian ad Litem (LGAL).
- Youth's parents, if termination has not occurred.
- The youth's two case planning team members, if applicable.

**Note:** Discuss or give written notification to the parent(s) about the plan to assess their agreement with the plan and determine their desire for ongoing contact. Parental agreement is desirable, but not required.

- Make a recommendation to the court for a permanency goal change.
- When the court order accepting the permanency goal change has been received from the court, complete the permanency plan approval packet; see Documentation in this item.

## COMPELLING REASONS

Compelling reasons must be documented in the case service plans explaining how each subsequent permanency goal is not in the youth's best interest. Examples of compelling reasons include, but are not limited to:

- The youth is 16 years or older and refuses to consent to his/her adoption, guardianship, or permanent placement with a fit and willing relative.
- After an extensive and ongoing search, it is determined that there are no fit and willing relatives currently available for placement.
- The parent suffers from a chronic illness and the youth is unable to return to the home, but there continues to be a close relationship between the youth and parent.

**Note:** There must be clear documentation within the case service plan describing the individual circumstances of the youth that necessitates the specified goal.

**American  
Indian/Alaska  
Native**

For compelling reasons for American Indian/Alaska Native children; see NAA 250, Compelling Reasons.

**SUPPORTIVE ADULT**

A supportive adult is a committed, caring adult who will be a lifeline for the youth, particularly those who are preparing to transition out of foster care to life on their own. The supportive adult must have a commitment to long-term care and responsibility for the youth, but has legitimate reasons for not adopting or pursuing guardianship.

All youth with a permanency goal of Permanent Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative or Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement **must** have a supportive adult identified as part of the permanency plan approval packet.

Youth may have more than one supportive adult. Each adult must sign an individual agreement and Permanency Pact indicating which supports he/she will provide the youth. All agreements must be submitted together in the permanency goal approval packet; see Documentation in this item.

**PPFWR**

For youth with a permanency goal of PPFWR, the primary supportive adult must be the identified relative caregiver providing placement for the youth.

***Role and Responsibilities for Relatives***

The caseworker must discuss the expected role and responsibilities of the relative with the PPFWR agreement. The expectations for the relative include but are not limited to:

- Care for the youth as a member of the family.
- Assume day-to-day decisions and long-range planning for the youth.
- Provide safe and nurturing care and ongoing developmental opportunities for the youth.

- Inform the caseworker of significant events in the youth's life and request services when needed to support the placement.
- Adhere to the *Prudent Parent Standard* guidelines; see FOM 722-11, Delegation of Parental Consent.
- Continue to meet all applicable legal, policy, licensing, payment, and administrative review requirements.

## APPLA

For youth with a permanency goal of APPLA, the supportive adult is an adult who:

- Has been identified by the youth.
- Has a relationship with the youth.
- Is willing to commit to a life-long relationship with the youth.
- Is a positive role model.
- Is able to provide the youth with specific support on an ongoing basis, including after the foster care case closes.

Additional factors that the supportive adult must possess include:

- Stable housing.
- Stable employment.
- No lifestyle concerns; for example, alcohol and substance abuse, that would limit his/her availability to support the youth.

If the youth identifies a supportive adult whose age is within 3 years of the youth's age, additional, more mature adults should also be identified.

If the supportive adult is related to the youth by a romantic or professional relationship, a letter or memo must be written by the supportive adult and included with the approval packet that demonstrates the supportive adult's lifelong commitment to the youth even if there is a change in the personal or professional relationship.

## DOCUMENTATION

The documents described in this section make up the *Permanency Plan Approval Packet*, which is compiled by the assigned caseworker. The permanency plan approval packet must be reviewed and approved by the foster care supervisor **and** the district manager/county director/child welfare director or PAFC director, before being submitted to the permanency resource

monitor for review; see Permanency Goal Achievement in this item. All forms in the packet must clearly document the supportive relationships in the youth's life and the stability of the placement.

### Permanency Plan Approval Packet

For PPFWR and APPLA, the following forms must be completed as part of the permanency plan approval packet:

- DHS-569, Permanency Goal Support Agreement.
  - The DHS-569, Permanency Goal Support Agreement, is completed with the youth, the identified supportive adult(s), and when appropriate the legal parent.
  - Provide a copy to each participant, upload a copy to the *Documents* hyperlink in MiSACWIS, and include the original agreement in the permanency plan approval packet.
- [Permanency Pact.](#)

The Permanency Pact is a free tool created by Foster Club that is designed to encourage life-long, kin-like connections between a young person and a supportive adult.

- Review the Permanency Pact with the youth and the supportive adult(s)/relative caregiver.
  - Complete the Permanency Pact Certificate with the youth and supportive adult(s)/relative caregiver.
  - Provide a copy to each participant, upload a copy to the *Documents* hyperlink in MiSACWIS, and include the original agreement in the permanency plan approval packet.
- DHS-347, Permanency Goal Approval.
  - The assigned caseworker must complete this form.
  - Upload a copy to the *Documents* hyperlink in MiSACWIS and attach the original as the cover sheet to the permanency plan approval packet.
- Independent Living Plan, if applicable.



**Note:** If independent living will be the youth's living arrangement, then a detailed independent living plan must be submitted with the permanency goal approval packet; see FOM 722-03C, Preparation and Placement of Older Youth, for detailed information on independent living plans.

### Annual Review/Change Form

The DHS-643, Permanency Goal Review, is the change form for **all** changes and reviews of permanency goals.

For PPFWR and APPLA, within 30 calendar days of a change in the relative placement or the supportive adult, **and** within 30 calendar days of the annual review date, the DHS-643, Permanency Goal Review, must be completed and submitted to the permanency resource monitor for review.

**Note:** Additional permanency plan approval packet documentation may be required depending on the reason for review.

### ***Annual Review Date***

The annual review date is calculated from permanency goal established date; see Changing the Permanency Goal in this item.

## PERMANENCY GOAL APPROVAL

The district manager/county director/child welfare director or placement agency foster care (PAFC) director must approve the permanency plan approval packet, which consists of the required permanency forms; see Documentation in this item.

**Note:** For PPFWR and APPLA the permanency goal ***approval date*** is the date the district manager/county director/child welfare director or PAFC director approves the permanency plan approval packet.

## PERMANENCY GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

The supervising agency must submit the approved permanency plan approval packet to the permanency resource monitor for review. The permanency resource monitor must submit the

permanency plan to the Children's Services Agency (CSA) designee, for final department approval. **The goal cannot be achieved until approval is received from the CSA designee.**

**Note:** If the permanency goal and plan is denied at any stage of the process, inform the relative(s), foster parent(s), youth and other appropriate persons and begin developing an alternative permanent plan.

### **Case Closure without Permanency Goal Achievement**

See FOM 722-3C, Older Youth: Preparation, Placement, and Discharge, for details on closing a foster care case without achieving a permanency goal.

## **ONGOING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

All applicable legal, policy, licensing and payment requirements for foster care must continue to be met for youth with the permanency goals of PPFWR or APPLA. The roles and responsibilities of the supervising agency, the caseworker, and if applicable the foster parent/relative caregiver continue throughout the life of the case.

### **Relative Search and Engagement**

For youth with the permanency goal of APPLA, the assigned caseworker must continue to identify, notify, and engage relatives until case closure. The ongoing efforts must be documented in each case service plan; see FOM 722-3B, Relative Engagement and Placement.

## **TERMINATION OF PERMANENCY PLAN**

The PPFWR or APPLA agreement will automatically terminate when court jurisdiction is terminated. The PPFWR or APPLA agreement may also be terminated when:

- The relative(s) or licensed foster parents, because of serious, unusual circumstances, gives written notice to the caseworker

that changes in circumstances make it impossible to fulfill the agreement.

- MDHHS or PAFC terminates the agreement based on serious, unusual circumstances after the foster care supervisor has reviewed and approved the termination.
- The youth requests, and the MDHHS or PAFC approves, termination of the agreement because of serious, unusual circumstances.

The foster care case for a youth with an APPLA permanency plan must not be closed unless the youth has:

- The means and ability to be self-supporting.
- A safe, appropriate place to live.
- Employment.
- Opportunity for continued education or vocational training.

The case service plan, independent living plan, and transition plan must reflect the above requirements for case closure. When the youth requests case closure, there must be services and supports identified to assist the youth after leaving foster care. If the youth determines that remaining in foster care placement or foster care independent living arrangement would best meet his/her needs, this decision must be reviewed and documented; see FOM 777-3C, Older Youth: Preparation, Placement, and Discharge.

## **YOUTH IN LONG AND SHORT-TERM FACILITIES**

Efforts must be made and documented to establish a supportive connection for youth placed or expected to transfer to a long-term care facility, such as an adult foster care home (AFC) or group home. The supportive connection may be a family member or a recruited adult who can provide this type of commitment to the youth. In rare circumstances, case-related professionals may be designated as supportive adults on the APPLA agreement, but documentation (memo or letter) from that supportive adult must be included in the permanency plan approval packet indicating that he or she is willing to maintain a long-term relationship with the youth when his/her professional involvement ends.

The goal of APPLA may be achieved while a youth is in a short term facility, if the plan is to transition to an independent living placement.